

2023 in Review

Library Accomplishments:

- Celebrated our 372nd finisher in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Program. We had 27 finishers in 2023 and 42,227 books read. This program is so important in fostering reading abilities for children before they attend school. By reading to your baby and or toddler, you develop print awareness, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, narrative skills and print motivation. Research shows that children who learn these six critical pre-reading skills before they start kindergarten, or are reading on their own, become better readers.
- Participated in community events, including Plaza Market Activities, Wonderland of Lights, Historical Homes Walk, 4-H Parade and Storytime, Street Fair parade, Career Expo, Boo-in-Bluffton, Parlor City Christmas, Hometown Christmas, Ossian Days, and Touch-a-Truck.
- Served 2 accredited daycares, 13 pre-school classrooms, 4 kindergarten classes, 2 intense intervention classes, and hosted weekly storytime visits for the Bluffton High School Life-Skills class.
- Offered free tax assistance to 354 patrons during tax season.
- Hosted a Pro Bono Day with Sprunger and Sprunger.
- Hosted our first Friends of the Library Mini Golf event.
- Partnered with Doug Sundling to have a display and program about the Flood of 2003 anniversary.
- Collaborated with local talent to offer programs on Service Dog skill/certification, food preservation, and a writing workshop.
- Added the database Brainfuse to assist with learning, homework and testing needs for all patrons; especially Literacy Alliance, Mango Languages with ESL training and Teachable (education material assistance for teachers and homeschool families).
- Added memory kits and puzzles for Alzheimer's and Dementia patients.
- Added hold pick-up lockers at Bluffton, Ossian and Southern Wells High School. In the first 2 months of use, we had 42 items picked up at Bluffton, 35 items picked up at Ossian and 12 items picked up at Southern Wells.

Staff Accomplishments:

- 6 staff members received or are working toward increasing their library certification/degree.
- The library has its 14th staff member graduate from the Wells County Leadership Academy and our 15th staff member going through Level 1.
- Numerous staff members are serving on community and professional boards including: Wells County Foundation, Parlor City Christmas, Leadership Academy and Leadership Academy Mentors, Historical Society, Genealogy Society, Bluffton NOW!, Wells County Chamber, Chamber Executive Committee, Rotary and Optimists.

Stats:

- Our stats are up from 2022.
- We purge all library cards that have been expired for 3 years at the beginning of each year. From March to December we saw 951 new library cards or an increase of 6.7%. Accounting for purged cards, we increased by 260 card holders from 2022 to 2023 or an increase of 1.76%.
- Circulation of physical material is up by 14% from 2022.
- When you include eMaterial, circulation is up 19% from 2022.
- eAudiobooks increased circulation by 35% from 2022.
eBooks increased circulation by 32% from 2022.
eMagazines increased circulation by 245% from 2022.
- Hoopla increased circulation by 100% from 2022.
- While public computer use is holding steady at a 2% increase of use, our wireless connections increased by 20%. This is evident in the amount of patrons using study rooms and tables for personal device use.
- Meeting room use is up by 15% from 2022 with 383 reservations and 8,028 attendees during 2023
- Study room use is up by 15% from 2022 with 3,243 reservations and a traffic count of 6,862 people.
- Supervised visits decreased by 3% from 2022 with 732 visits.
- Reference questions have increased by 8% from 2022.
- Programming attendance increased by 38% over all from 2022. Even without Children's Book Festival numbers (this program is every other year) we increased 29% in programming attendance over all from 2022.
- Book-a-Librarian increased by 44% from 2022.
- Notary services increased by 12% from 2022. We are currently averaging 10 notaries a week.
- Our patron count increased by 8% from 2022 with 33,543 patron visits during the year.